

COURSE OUTLINE FOR PSYCHOLOGY 720
CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS IN PSYCHOLOGY, NEUROSCIENCE & BEHAVIOUR
2008-09

Course Co-ordinator

Patrick Bennett (Room 412, x23012, bennett@mcmaster.ca)

Content and Schedule

The course includes seven modules, each three weeks in duration. The first three modules will be completed in the fall term (September – December), the last four modules in the winter term (January – April).

- Module 1: Cognition/Perception (David Shore dshore@mcmaster.ca)
September 15, 22, 29
- Module 2: Developmental (Louis Schmidt schmidtl@mcmaster.ca)
October 6, 20, 27
- Module 3: Systems and Behavioural Neuroscience (Sue Becker becker@mcmaster.ca)
November 10, 24, Dec 1
- Module 4: Systems and Behavioural Neuroscience (Dan Goldreich goldrd@mcmaster.ca)
January 5, 12, 19
- Module 5: Cognition/Perception (Judy Shedden shedden@mcmaster.ca)
January 26, February 2, 9
- Module 6: Evolution/Social (David Feinberg feinberg@mcmaster.ca)
February 23, March 2, 9
- Module 7: Evolution/Social (Denys deCatanzaro decatanz@mcmaster.ca)
March 16, 23, 30

When and Where

Classes will take place on Mondays from 2:30 to 5:30pm in Room 311.

Course Objectives

This course has two primary objectives. First, by offering seven short modules that cover a range of research areas, our aim is to encourage breadth of knowledge across many of the areas of research represented in the department. Knowing a bit about research areas other than the one in which you specialize will help you take an active role in departmental activities, such as colloquia and informal reading groups. The more graduate students take part in such activities, the more vibrant the intellectual atmosphere in the department. Second, this course aims to teach analytical and communication skills needed for a successful scientific career. This objective will be addressed with short writing assignments, oral presentations, and engagement in discussion of course readings at our class meetings.

Assessment

For five of the seven modules, students will receive a grade on two short papers, which together will contribute 60% toward the overall course grade (i.e., 12% in each of 5 modules). For the remaining two of the seven modules, students will give a short oral presentation in which they lead the discussion of one or more of the assigned readings. The grade for each of these two oral presentations will contribute 12% toward the overall course grade. The remaining 16% of the course grade (about 2.3% for each of 7 modules) will be allocated at the discretion of each of the module instructors, and will be described by the instructor at the beginning of each module. For instance, the instructor may base this

part of the grade entirely on class participation. A summary of the components of the overall course grade is provided in the table below:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Grade</u>
Short Papers	10	60
Presentations	2	24
Instructor's Discretion		16

Deadlines

Unless stated otherwise, one written assignment will be due at the beginning of the second and third class of each module. Late papers will not be accepted and will be given a grade of zero.

You are required to meet with the module leader several days prior to delivering your presentation. At this meeting, be prepared to discuss the target article and give an outline of your presentation.

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work, and are expected to be familiar with the University's regulations regarding academic integrity (see section 6.1, Graduate Calendar 2008-09, pp. 15-16).